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Letters to the Editor

Support for Admiral Inman

Your April 23 editorial concerning Admiral B. R. Inman's resignation as Deputy Director of Central Intelligence prompts several comments.

First, you suggest that Admiral Inman, once Director of the National Security Agency, was hardly a leading protector of civil liberties. Without the Admiral's strong support, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the statute regulating the approval of national security wiretaps, would not now be law. Further, the strong procedures which now govern all U.S. government signals intelligence activities are direct testament to Admiral Inman's recognition that protecting legitimate privacy does not harm intelligence missions but rather keeps them free of dangerous and unnecessary diversions.

You further suggest that, again as Director of NSA, Admiral Inman somehow ignored Soviet deceptions. That does a serious disservice to the good name of this nation's finest professional intelligence officer. Every action taken by him during the lifetime of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence suggests rather that clearheaded and oftentimes forward-looking recognition of problems has been the Admiral's trademark.

Finally, you suggest that, as a professional, Admiral Inman would not have qualified for the post of Director of Central Intelligence because personal loyalty to the

President is the final test for this political appointment.

The post is a political one. Its incumbent serves at the pleasure of the President. That is as it should be. The top intelligence post is an important one. A President should always have the ability to effect a change in intelligence policy or organizational structure. But the chief loyalty that a DCI should have is not to the political survival of the President, but to the truth. The Secretaries of State or Defense, whom everyone recognizes to be political figures, can elucidate a President's policies. What the DCI and the intelligence community must do is provide independent analyses. That is a nonpartisan function. The nation can accept or reject a President's foreign policy but it must depend on the accuracy and impartiality of the intelligence which exists to support policy.

Our last three Presidents have appointed DCIs whose terms were or seem likely to be coincident with theirs. That is a departure from previous practice and an unfortunate one. I hope that future Presidents do not pass over outstanding professionals like Admiral Inman. His kind are greatly needed by this nation.

EDWARD P. BOLAND

Chairman
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